ANNALES DU PATRIMOINE
Revue académique consacrée aux domaines du patrimoine



N° 06 / 2006

Revue

ANNALES DU PATRIMOINE

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ISSN : 1112 - 5020

Sommaire

Understanding Culture in FL Learning

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The issues addressed in this paper concern primarily the understanding of the Target Language Culture (English, in this case) and how the current syllabus hinders its understanding and learning. This will contribute, we hope, to the debate on Language and Alterity that this conference is about.

We shall first refer to the place of pride the English Language has in the current linguistic market which is due to the efforts dedicated primarily by language policy makers, educationalists, text-book writers, in Britain and the US. We shall also touch one or two aspects concerning the learner's awareness of cultural differences in classroom settings in Algeria. Then, we shall draw an overall comparison between the entry profile and the exit profile of a BA holder in English prior to the eighties and after. Finally, we refer to the quality of instruction, whether and how FL culture is taught in Algerian universities and what the Learner's and the Teacher's attitude (s) are towards the English Language in an Algerian educational setting.

Many EFL educators seem to take for granted the fact that the teaching and learning of culture is directly or indirectly part of the reading of texts and literature of the target language. Classroom activities such as written expression - with the teaching of particular transitional expressions, the use of the modals, cause-and-effect reasoning (which may not necessarily

be identical in sentence structure to those of L1), achieving sentence clarity, chronological order, and the like - are often cited as sound grounds for acquiring the target culture. Conversation activities - with dialogues including idiomatic expressions and conversation in context, role-playing, mimicry, etc. - are also suggested as activities dealing in one way or another with L2 culture. Other teachers prefer light verses and sayings to introduce the students to L2 culture. Finally, Lab. Sessions - tapes and videos - are sometimes used to this end. Curriculum wise, modules such as Brit. Civ. & Lit., Am. Civ. & Lit., Third World Lit. etc. represent the official facets of cultural learning to be studied. These are spelt out in the official syllabi in Algeria.

Our observation of classroom activities indicates that there are cases where the student is sometimes made aware of cultural learning. As a matter of fact, one teacher started the classroom warm up with the cultural meaning of ‘shaking hands’ for English people and how it differs from the typical everyday shaking of hands of most Mediterranean countries. Some teachers use reading and listening comprehension teaching aids such as "Making America: the society and culture of the United States (1992), or "Landmarks of American Language & Linguistics", or even "Are You Listening" to develop their activities on L2 culture.

Culture teaching and learning may also be present in physical activities such as theatre plays. This takes place if time and space allow it. The overloaded teaching programs and the absence of theatre facilities are often cited as the main causes for the lack of such activities. Some teachers are so

strongly motivated for such cultural activities that they go beyond the bureaucratic and logistic hurdles and organise these cultural events even in the open air. Nevertheless, our interviews with practitioners demonstrate that even if all these pedagogical activities are well conducted, it still remains unclear to them just how cultural learning and acquisition could be achieved and what impact this has on their classroom practice. Such a reaction from the teachers is proof enough that they are all aware of the issue at stake. We shall see below that as long as the learner does not have a face-to-face contact with the natives of L2, nor does he perform actual cross-cultural communication, his motivation for culture learning may not be very strong. He often ends up as holder of a "Licence d'Enseignement de l'Anglais" who is neither competent in the actual use of English nor is he competent - culturally speaking - in L2. This is the situation of English in Algeria where contact with natives of English has been virtually nil for the past decade or so. Similarly, institutions representing L2 in the country such as the British Council, the Afro-American Council, ESP centres and the like have moved house. The satellite dish is not the answer to cultural contact and understanding, as it stands as a passive or uni-directional contact with the foreign culture.

The presence of culture in writings is as old as the written scripts go back in history. It is through symbols and writings on stones that we learn about ancient cultures. The Egyptian hieroglyphs are a good example. Recently, the pattern is more evident: people learn a foreign language in order to read and study its literature. The Grammar Translation Approach was

one of the most widely used methods and approaches to achieve this aim. The best authors were selected and their writings were studied through compositions.

Pedagogically speaking, one may look at the 60’s as a starting point where textbook writers and syllabus designers introduced culture learning as part of EFL programs. This was the era where the audio-lingual method took place of pride in language teaching. Stress on the spoken form of language as a dynamic representation of L2 culture has somehow overridden the static written form of language. The TV that invaded most homes is a significant factor for this change of attitude from the "book"’ to the "look". Hymes’ communicative competence of the 70’s and Labov’s study of language in its social context are among those who put greater emphasis on communication, context and social environment in L2 teaching. The most significant aspects of L2 culture were introduced in the curricula. The communicative approach and the debate on "language use" and "language usage" led to various frameworks based essentially on communicative competence. The gap widened between a communicative approach and a grammar-based approach. The latter was considered as less integrating of language and culture (grammatical structures in isolation). Culture teaching and learning were based on the principle that communication must be in its cultural context. The objective being to prepare learners for meaningful culture learning. Culture teaching and learning have thus become an important field in applied linguistics with a profusion of publications in this vein (Cargill, 1987, Harrison, 1990, Higgs, 1990, etc.).

Every society orchestrates its ways of life and beliefs, which in turn have an impact on form and function as used by natives of a particular language. Our main concern in teaching a foreign language must not be with grammatical input only. The fact remains that what's output in the syllabus in terms of structures, units, etc. does not necessarily go in as input in the learners' mind. Remedial work is one of the ways to check out whether what's output in the syllabus is input in the learner's cognition. This still has to be demonstrated as fossilised errors have often proved this not to be the case. As native learners, we acquire language together with the paralinguistic heritage of our own culture. This should be applied to an FL setting. The fact is that language codes cannot be taught under the form of units in isolation (which seems to be the general tendency in our classroom practices in Algeria). The processes of "*sociocultural transmission*" are triggered as soon as language teaching starts. When your student asks you what "haggis" means, no need to compare it to "عصبان" (a variety of mince meat, bowels, etc. with dry raisins) as one teacher did it willingly during our class observations. Although the food may taste somehow the same, the environment and the social event where these seemingly similar varieties of food are prepared remain totally different.

One often hears "Language Teaching is Culture Teaching". Our role as educators is to teach the culture of the foreign language whether it is included in the official syllabus and ordered through ministerial instructions or not. McLeod says in this respect: "by teaching a language... one is inevitably already teaching culture implicitly" (1976: 212). The contents

in which the language exercises are worked out and the teacher's attitudes towards L2 culture are paramount factors in EFL. This does not seem to be the case in our schools and universities. We thus need to go beyond a mere monitoring the linguistic forms that our learners produce and become more aware of the complex processes of intercultural mediation that our learners undergo.

In the area of foreign language instruction and culture in Algeria, the "Licence d'Enseignement de l'Anglais" per se is a good starting point for culture understanding and learning which should take into account the learners motivation in the first place. We shall draw, for this purpose, a comparison between the students' motivation for FL culture in the 80's and today's students who do not seem to 'worry much' about FL culture as much as they do for an overall average mark of 10 out of 20 (or a pass equivalent) in the exams.

Prior to the 1980s, the student's entry profile was that of a baccalaureate holder with an above average mark in English and a strong motivation to learn this language and its culture. Socially, the father was a skilled worker living in an urban area. Some of the freshers came from mixed secondary schools. Their motives for English language studies were more integrative and cultural than vocational. They were dictated somehow by the environment in the city (American and English folksongs, films, the British Council, The Afro-American Institute, etc.). The teaching staff was partly national and partly expatriate (UK, US, Australia, New Zealand, India and Pakistan). Algeria was then a promising oil and gas producer heading for socio-economic prosperity.

In the 1980's, a massive program for higher studies abroad (mainly in the UK) was launched. The aim was to provide qualified national teaching personnel with higher degrees (Master, Ph. D.). This did not last long. A drastic reduction in the foreign teaching staff took place partly because of the crash in oil prices of 1986. At the same time, new approaches and teaching methods instructed via ministerial notes (the Communicative Approach) have taken aback most teachers who were neither prepared nor trained for this sudden change in teaching practices. The communicative approach which advocates the teaching and learning of language and culture in context was limited to a ministerial instruction that the teachers did not actually apply for the simple reason that they were neither aware of the literature behind this approach nor were they trained for it. The teaching of English and other foreign languages in Algeria boiled down to individual initiatives with the material available on the spot. Even within the same department, the same module is taught differently from one teacher to another.

This is still the case today with a learner's entry profile that differs from that of the 80's. The student comes from a mixed urban / rural background. In most cases, the students are weak in English and almost ignorant of the culture of this language. The motives for a BA in English have become more instrumental than cultural. The teaching staff is fully national and trained locally and on the spot.

Attitude and motivation towards the target language (English in this case) have changed substantially in the past twenty years or so. Attitude here refers to the general state of

apprehension in the student towards the target language and culture. The students' attitude towards the English language and culture is characterised by a mixed reaction to the language in terms of structural difficulties and apprehension towards its speakers. Globally, English is regarded as a necessary "open window" to the West. Some closely link it to computing, science and technology. Others are keen to open-heartedly absorb the culture and customs of the English people without necessarily knowing why. Others still, insist on the fact that English must not "disconnect" them from "their culture" and "their language" which they say is Classical Arabic, "a language of a major tradition", they maintain. This is probably due to the general apprehension that French tried to do the same earlier by pushing Classical Arabic to religious spheres and the Mosque.

Cultural understanding and learning is in a vacuum in our classrooms because motivational props at the family and university levels are scarce for the student nowadays. This appears in his basic need in ELT, i.e., to get a degree for a teaching job or any other job for that matter. It is clearly summarised in expressions used among students and produced in the mother tongue. These may be translated as: "I want to *lock* the module" (I want to get a pass mark), "I only need half a point to *close* my module", "I don't think I'll be able to *close* the module this year".

These characteristics of the student are closely linked to environmental characteristics for ELT. On the whole, direct contact with the native speaker does not exist. Programs such as "Follow me" and "On we go" that used to be shown on

Algerian TV have disappeared from the screen. This may be due to a shortage of supplies in the series. It may also be the result of a dictated language policy. The only contact then, remains through networks via the satellite dish, the Net, and through the written literature available on the spot, i.e. in our university libraries and perhaps in some bookshops in town. Both the TV channels and the book represent a uni-directional contact that is not always very motivating for the student to learn about culture.

Another aspect of this lack of culture understanding and learning in our universities is the teacher himself. The teacher who used to be a model for English language and culture doesn't hold that place of pride anymore. His teaching has become routine work with the same modules being taught over the years without keeping on a par with new theoretical trends. This is mainly true for content modules. Even the topics in oral expression, reading comprehension and listening comprehension are the same year in year out. The lack of teaching material, documented literature, teacher training courses, adequate teaching programs etc. does not help to overcome this vacuum where social tensions undermine the teaching itself. In fact, the whole question on the teacher's attitude to English and his motivation towards teaching a foreign language remains open to debate.

When the student reaches university, he comes with a cultural background in his own language (Arabic, Berber...), perhaps some cultural knowledge in French and a rather poor knowledge of English language and culture. This background knowledge made of a mixture of Arabic (including Berber)

culture and French culture constitutes the common layer on which his learning is based.

The question remains as to how and what should we teach our students in the "Licence". As it stands, the quality of L2 instruction is not effective enough to achieve an adequate teaching / learning that not only allows the student to cultivate himself for a better cross-cultural communication but also to preserve his own "forces propres" and cultural identity. No adequate responsive educational or pedagogical programs have been suggested this far. The BA curriculum dates back to the 1980s (perhaps prior to this date) and no substantial amendments have been made in spite of the drastic changes in the social-economic picture of the country. The teacher lacks qualified ELT professionalism despite new ELT methodologies and approaches that proliferate in the market. The teaching is often conducted hastily with no suitable teaching material or adequately trained instructors. EFL methodologies and approaches are often made available to the teacher once they are outdated and they most of the time leave him confused if not intimidated in his task. We have this far failed to develop appropriate curricula that encourage culture understanding and learning. As teachers, we still use English as an educational end (i.e. leading to a BA degree). We do not always see it as a means to an end, i.e., a language that opens up ways to global communication and modernity. The question often raised is where does the problem actually lay? Some teachers and course designers see it in the dissimilarity that exists between L1 and L2 which affects language instruction, while they agree that the cultural background (Arabic / French) of the learner

may help bridge this gap. Others see the "cloisonnements universitaires" and the "malaise social" as the prime factors that hinder the development of a proper English language curriculum where culture understanding and learning should be implemented. Others still blame the student himself whose motivation has become purely instrumental. But in any case, they all agree that the lack of internal support (governmental funds) and external material and moral support have a direct impact on the quality of L2 instruction in Algeria. We shall leave this issue open to debate.

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Langues et interculturalité dans la littérature d'Afrique francophone

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Un rapprochement de la fiction africaine francophone (par son hybridité linguistique) avec la "World fiction" offre des perspectives de lecture de cette littérature nouvelle et féconde. Il suffit de considérer que la notion d'écriture francophone et donc eurographe ne va pas de soi car elle désigne une littérature produite dans une langue qui pour être la langue de l'Autre n'est pas tout à fait étrangère, car étant une langue seconde. Ce fait pousse l'écrivain à un phénomène de créolisation de la langue de l'Autre qui envahit tout le continent. Créolisant la langue d'emprunt et se l'appropriant, les écrivains africains la déterritorialisent et produisent ainsi des "textes rhizomes" retranscrivant la diversité du monde dans une sorte de totalité fragmentée. De la sorte, les textes francophones brassent des langues différentes, et tombent dans le chaos monde dont parle Glissant : j'appelle chaos du monde le choc actuel de tant de cultures qui s'embrassent, se repoussent, disparaissent, subsistent partout, s'endorment ou se transforment lentement ou à vitesse foudroyante (...) le tout-monde qui est totalisant n'est pas (pour nous) total(1).

Ce que la présente rencontre me donne donc l'occasion de montrer est que l'hybridité linguistique qui est le principe d'écriture de la francophonie littéraire n'est pas identitaire mais ouverte sur l'altérité. L'hybridité linguistique dans la post

colonie francophone est de ce point de vue, une écriture du monde. Or donc, cette écriture du monde dans les textes contemporains peut aussi être vue, telle est du moins l'hypothèse qui voudrait se donner ici à partager, comme une stratégie visant l'accès à un bien symbolique qui est reconnaissance et consécration "des petites littératures" dans la "République Mondiale des Lettres" dont parle Casanova(2).

I - Texte hybride et World fiction :

Ce qui caractérise peut-être le plus les textes récents en Afrique Francophone, c'est leur multilinguisme. De fait, la prolifération d'écrivains migrants est étroitement liée à l'apparition dans la littérature du multilinguisme, de la polyphonie ou encore du réalisme magique. Les écrivains convoquent désormais dans leurs récits des réalités contrastées tenant à une multitude de registres culturels et de langues. On se doit de mentionner ici Ahmadou Kourouma et Abdelkader Khatibi, notamment, qui (Khatibi) théorise et pratique la "bi-langue". Ceux-ci comme d'autres, Sony Labou Tansi par exemple, "mêlent différents idiomes venus du monde d'entier. (Ainsi) ce qui a commencé dans les écrits post-coloniaux comme une créolisation (du français) est devenue un processus de migration littéraire massive, de transplantation, et de fertilisation..."(3). Par-là même, ces auteurs participent à une mondialisation de la langue de l'ex-colonisateur et de la littérature qui s'en autorise car, on le sait, depuis l'expérience glissantienne du langage, le multilinguisme et la créolisation sont une notation de l'écriture du monde. Glissant de ce point de vue théorise : On conçoit vite qu'il s'est de tout temps maintenu des endroits de créolisation (les métissages culturels),

mais celle qui nous intéresse aujourd’hui, porte sur la totalité-monde, une fois réalisée cette totalité (...) un tel chatoiement de l’étant éclabousse dans mon langage : notre commune condition est ici le multilinguisme. J’écris désormais en présence de toutes les langues du monde, de la nostalgie poignante de leur devenir menacé[4].

C’est qu’il y a chez nos écrivains un règne de l’écrit qui n’est en aucune façon rédhibitoire à l’expression de l’oral. Cette hybridation de la langue de la métropole mène l’écrivain africain à une sorte d’hétérolinguisme qui fait de lui un "passeur de langues" et un "voyageur entre les cultures" qui s’approprie la langue de l’autre, la viole et condamne sa dimension impératrice. Il y a donc là, on le voit, une cohabitation de la langue de la périphérie avec celle du Centre. C’est le cas du Congolais Sony Labou Tansi dont la perversion linguistique débouche sur un acte de déstabilisation de la langue. Sony draine, de fait, avec lui tout l’esprit séculaire de l’oralité auquel il plie la langue écrite. Il faut cependant comprendre : Si la prose sonyenne manifeste une certaine intertextualité avec la tradition orale, elle ne s’en réclame pas entièrement.

Comme nombre de romans africains de la seconde génération, le roman de sony convoque les formes littéraires du roman européen et les formes de la tradition orale pas pour se situer dans une poétique transculturelle. L’écrivain africain, dès lors, témoigne en son langage des multiples langues en présence desquelles il écrit et qui sont constitutives d’une société cosmopolite, où à tout le moins d’une identité cosmopolite. Il devient un écrivain bilingue comme le

Marocain Abdelkader Khatibi qui exprime ainsi cette nouvelle condition dans Amour Bilingue : Que désirait-il ? Qu'elle fût cet abîme entre lui et lui, dans leur langue commune ? Lui demandait-il l'impossible ? Pour lui parler, il était traduit lui-même par un double mouvement, du parler maternel à l'étranger, et de l'étranger en étranger en se métamorphosant, Dieu sait par quelles extravagances(5).

Cette impossibilité identitaire que s'est donné pour tâche de raccommoder l'écrivain maghrébin suscite des interrogations comme en témoigne la bi-langue, le héros d'Amour Bilingue. Tout ce roman apparaît ainsi comme un méta texte exprimant parfaitement "l'inconçu", la dualité culturelle ou ce que Derrida appelle ce "trouble de l'identité"(6) qui fait de l'écrivain francophone pour, précisément parodier le même Derrida, un écrivain monolingue chez l'autre. Pour Khatibi, de fait, l'écrivain est un sujet nomade c'est-à-dire un être périphérique qui enjambe les frontières. Il pose la question suivante : "Quelle est la patrie d'un écrivain ? Est ce uniquement sa langue ? Est ce l'unité idéelle être un terroir, une langue et une identité culturelle d'esprit et de corps ? Est ce la mosaïque d'un exil et d'une transposition universelle ?"(7). L'écrivain, de la sorte, n'est pas arrimé à un territoire défini ou à une culture homogène. A force d'écrire entre deux langues, l'écrivain est comme le note Bensmaïa.

Un écrivain, qui parce qu'il évolue entre deux langages, deux frontières, et conséquemment plusieurs tranches temporelles, ne peut plus appartenir à une histoire, un peuple, un pays, mais au contraire à un nouvel espace - temps lequel, bien qu'étant le produit d'une création artistique, ne peut quand

même pas être réduit à une "fiction" où un "mythe" purs[8].

Il y a donc à l'œuvre chez nos auteurs francophones une interlangue qu'on peut définir à la suite de Klaus Vogel comme la langue qui se forme chez un apprenant d'une langue étrangère à mesure qu'il est confronté à des éléments de la langue cible, sans pour autant qu'elle coïncide avec cette langue cible. Dans la constitution de l'interlangue entrent la langue maternelle, éventuellement d'autres langues étrangères préalablement acquises, et la langue cible[9].

Birahima, l'enfant soldat d'Ahamadou Kourouma qui s'aide de cinq dictionnaires pour écrire son "Blablabla" et trouver les mots idoines, mots fétiches pour dire son histoire, produit, à coup sûr, une interlangue[10]. L'interlangue de Kourouma manifeste une relation au français de la part d'un apprenant autodidacte qui laisse s'épanouir les jeux de mots, les créations lexicales et syntaxiques tout en apprenant et en vérifiant dans les fameux dictionnaires le sens des mots, qu'il veut justes dans une "écriture pas tout à fait et intermédiaire" selon l'heureuse formule de Boehmer[11]. Moura n'a donc pas tort lorsqu'il écrit que : "l'auteur post-colonial est un véritable passeur de langue dont la création maintient la tension entre deux (ou plusieurs) idiomes et parfois même, dans le cas de l'interlangue, rompt la norme linguistique afin de se forger un langage propre"[12].

Un tel hétérolinguisme nous fait découvrir la variété du monde. L'écrivain héterolinguiste, de la sorte, dit le monde et son imaginaire car "le divers du monde a besoin de l'encens du monde. L'éclat des littératures orales est ainsi venu, non pas remplacer l'écrit, mais en changer l'ordre. Ecrire c'est vraiment

dire : s’éprendre du monde sans se disperser, ni s’y diluer"[(13)].

On le voit à partir de la théorie du "Tout-Monde" glissantien, l’oralité et l’interlangue participent de poétiques diverses et multiples qui transcrivent l’imaginaire du monde dont il parle encore : "L’idée du monde s’autorisera de l’imaginaire du monde, des poétiques entremêlées qui me permettent de deviner en quoi mon bien conjoint à d’autres, en quoi sans bouger il s’aventure ailleurs, et comment, il m’emporte dans ce mouvement immobile"[(14)].

Une telle "globalisation" nécessaire de la littérature africaine francophone par sa langue - ou son interlangue ne suffit toutefois à oblitérer le fait qu’elle peut être perçue comme une stratégie visant à faire rentrer les littératures mineures[(15)] dans l’univers littéraire international.

2 - Politique linguistique et capital littéraire :

En effet, si les premiers écrivains nationaux en Afrique francophone se réfèrent à une idée politique du littéraire, les derniers venus vont se référer aux lois littéraires internationales et autonomes pour faire exister un autre type de littérature et de "capital littéraire"[(16)]. Je me propose donc en partant du modèle établi par Casanova, de montrer qu’il existe des politiques linguistiques et stylistiques dans les territoires dominés qui agissent comme des stratégies révolutionnaires tendant à les faire admettre au patrimoine littéraire international. Pour Casanova en effet, "Excentriques" au plein sens du mot, ces écrivains de seconde génération vont devenir les artisans des grandes révolutions littéraires, Ils luttent avec des armes spécifiques pour changer l’ordre littéraire établi. Ils innovent et bouleversent les codes littéraires les mieux admis au méridien

de Greenwich littéraire, contribuant ainsi à changer en profondeur, à renouveler et même à bouleverser les critères de la modernité et, partant, les pratiques de toute la littérature mondiale[(17)].

L'interlangue qui a le plus cours aujourd'hui et concerne un ajout de termes ou d'expressions de la langue "étrangère" - ou considérée comme telle selon le point de vue du destinataire - dans la langue française peut aussi être lue comme un néo-exotisme tendant à briser les frontières littéraires, à attirer le lecteur français par l'usage d'une langue "colorée" mais demeurée lisible pour ce dernier. La langue métissée de Beyala fournit à cet effet de multiples exemples. Une langue "bâtonmaniquée" que l'auteur "a mis à la page au son du tam-tam, aux ricanements du balafon, aux cris des griots"[(18)].

C'est plus une langue métissée qu'africanisée qui amalgame expressions africaines francisées et structure française. Une langue française travaillée qui laisse penser a priori à une africanisation du français mais qui ne peut, au total, entretenir cette illusion que chez le lecteur français. Il y a donc là un glissement des positions énonciatrices du destinateur vers le destinataire où le Moi producteur de l'énoncé se tient pour étranger par rapport à lui-même et se déplace vers l'Autre censé le recevoir. L'Autre, destinataire du discours est sans aucun doute français, mais bien également désormais le moi destinateur. Il s'agit ici d'un néo-exotisme au sens de Laronde : Le néo-exotisme est un faisceau de pratiques qui appartiennent au monde oriental (donc, étrangères au monde occidental mais sont le fait de l'oriental en position interne au monde occidental). Dans les deux cas on voit que

quelque chose ne change pas ; c’est la place de l’occident comme base référentielle du discours, ce que confirme le maintien de l’oriental dans la position de l’étranger au discours oriental[19].

Il est à cet égard manifeste que ce glissement se note dans le titre du deuxième essai de l'écrivain camerounaise, Lettre d’une afro - française à ses compatriotes (1999) par rapport au premier, Lettre d’une africaine à ses sœurs occidentales, signe que le lectorat a changé et que le destinateur du discours s’assimile désormais au destinataire. L’interlangue telle que pratiquée par Beyala a donc pour fonction d’élargir son lectorat, de briser les frontières et de redéfinir subrepticement les frontières géographiques et culturelles du champ littéraire. L’écrivain signe, par là même, des textes cosmopolites reflétant son identité afro-française. C’est encore ce que l’on constate dans le procédé d’arabisation textuelle auxquelles a recours le roman maghrébin par l’inclusion de certains mots arabes ou de certaines expressions françaises arabisées.

C’est d’ailleurs ce qu’exprime un personnage de Nedjma de Kateb Yacine : "Il faut bien dire que le vocabulaire français comprend 281 mots d’origine arabe... Nous aussi, nous influençons leur civilisation…"[20]. De sorte qu’on peut dire du romancier maghrébin qu’il cherche les moyens adéquats de forger un monde où pourront coexister la tradition arabe et la modernité occidentale ; ce dont témoigne L’enfant de sable de Tahar Ben Jelloun[21]. Ici, le conteur fait référence aux versets coraniques et parfois les cite tout simplement pour exhiber sa connaissance de son milieu culturel. Dans un cas beaucoup plus récent, Latifa Ben Mansour agrémente son texte, La Prière

de la peur[22], de l’histoire arabe d’antan, de versets coraniques, de poésie, de légendes, et réussit à métisser la langue française. Ce que donnent donc à voir ces textes, c’est un bilinguisme, signe d’une dualité culturelle et de lectorat.

On peut cependant lire dans cet affirmation différentialiste une solution formelle trouvée à l’inégalité littéraire dans le fait d’aller chercher au Centre "la richesse et les possibles littéraires"[23], pour les importer sur leur terre. Cette interlangue francophone entre enracinement linguistique et néo-exotisme permet, de ce point de vue, à la littérature francophone d’exister. C’est ce que souligne Halen : Le discours critique peut faire être ces domaines et, par voie, obtenir (...), plus de droit à l’existence que par la voie de la concurrence normale avec les producteurs du Centre. Senghor eût-il choisit d’être un poète français, non "nègre", serait oublié. De même, pour Chamoiseau et Confiant, Makine et Alexakis, Djebar et Maalouf[24].

Tout se passe désormais comme si l'on demandait, insidieusement, aux textes francophones d'exprimer un différentialisme linguistique et culturel pour pouvoir être reconnus. Et nos auteurs l'ont bien compris qui, par le biais d'un néo-exotisme, montrent le dynamisme de la langue française et sa capacité d'absorption d'autres langues ; langue française à laquelle ils doivent, du reste, se sentir étrangers. La reconnaissance et l'appartenance des littératures dominées à l'univers littéraire international semble être à ce prix.

L’on voit, au total, que l’hybridité linguistique à l’œuvre dans la littérature d’Afrique francophone repose, à sa manière, la question de la dialectique du Même et de l’Autre. Le Même

s’adresse désormais à l’Autre, de qui il attend reconnaissance, et lui fait comprendre dans sa langue qu’ils sont semblables mais différents. Une telle hétérogénéité lui permet d’abolir les frontières, de faire vaciller son identité et de ne plus appartenir à un monde mais au monde. Mais ceci repose également le problème de la pertinence du modèle théorique différentialiste de la francophonie qui suppose des frontières dans l’usage de la langue et un franchissement de celles-là avec tout ce que cela sous entend comme écart, déviance, irrégularité. Ce modèle contraint la littérature francophone à un différentialisme linguistique et culturel en vue d’exister. De la sorte, une telle répartition implicite entre Centre et Périphérie a des relents d’empire et appelle à la réflexion un comparatisme intra-francophone - a littérature française étant nécessairement réintégrée dans ce champ d’études qui la comprend. Alors, la littérature francophone serait appréciée non plus pour son altérité (qui pose le problème du Moi auquel on est étranger) mais pour elle-même, c'est à dire, tout simplement, un fait littéraire.

Notes :

1 - E. Glissant : Traité du tout-monde, poétique IV, éd. Gallimard, Paris 1997, p. 22.

2 - Cf. P. Casonava : La République Mondiale des Lettres, éd. Seuil, Paris 1999, 2e P., pp. 241 - 281.

3 - E. Boehmer : Colonial and Post colonial Literature, Oxford - New-York, Oxford university Press 1996, p. 233.

4 - E. Glissant : op. cit., p. 236.

5 - A. Amour : Bilingue, Montpellier, Fata Mongana, 1983, p. 27.

6 - J. Derrida : Le Monolinguisme de l’Autre, Galilée, Paris 1996, p. 32.

7 - A. Khatibi : Nationalisme et internationalisme littéraires, in Figures de

l’étranger dans la littérature française, cité par R. Bensmaïa, "Political Goegraphy of Literature", in M. P. Le Hin, D. Strand, Ed., French Cultural Studies : Criticism at the crossroads, Albany, State University of New York press, 2000, p. 296.

8 - R. Bensmoïa : op. cit., p. 295.

9 - K. Vogel : L’interlangue, la langue de l’apprenant, éd. Nathan, Paris 1995, p. 19.

10 - A. Kourouma : Allah n’est pas obligé, Paris, Seuil, 2000.

11 - E. Boehmer : op. cit., p. 232.

12 - J.- M. Moura : Critique postcoloniale et littératures francophones africaines, in S. Diop éd., Fictions africaines et postcolonialisme, l’Harmattan, Paris 2002, p. 80.

13 - E. Glissant : op. cit., p. 121.

14 - Ibid., p. 120.

15 - Ce sont, selon Deleuze et Guattari, les littératures qu’"une minorité fait dans une langue majeure", in Kafka, pour une littérature mineure, Paris, Minuit, 1983, p. 75.

16 - P. Casanova : op. cit., p. 440.

17 - Ibid., p. 441.

18 - C. Beyala : Assèze l’africaine, Albin Michel, Paris 1994, pp. 68 et 93.

19 - M. Laronde : Autour du roman beur, l’Harmattan, Paris 1993, p. 213.

20 - K. Yacine : Nedjma, Seuil, Paris 1956, p. 75.

21 - T. Ben Jelloun : L'enfant de sable, Seuil, Paris 1985.

22 - L. Ben Mansour : La Prière de la peur, Ed. De la Différence, Paris 1997.

23 - P. Casanova : op. cit., p. 442.

24 - P. Halen : Les stratégies francophones du style, l’exemple de quelques sauvages du Nord, in P. S. Diop éd., Littératures francophones, langues et styles, l’Harmattan, Paris 2001, p. 226.

A linguistic analysis of MTG:
A spoken dialect of Arabic

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The present paper constitutes a humble attempt towards a synchronic description of Mostaganem Spoken Arabic(1). that one should be referring to throughout as MTG.

By applying the methods developed by modern Linguistics, one intends to examine - though succinctly - some phonological phenomena attested for the vernacular under investigation. Here, and for space limitations, one has selected among an exhaustive list of phonological processes, two major phonological aspects. Namely, those of emphasis and syllable structure. These are preceded by a brief historical survey of the town followed by MTG's phoneme inventory.

It is commonly acknowledged that it is mainly due to some historical and social factors that Arabic dialects spread from outside the Arabian Peninsular to merge with other varieties. Yet, and as George S. Colin (1948) postulates : "On est très mal renseignés sur les conditions dans lesquelles l'emploi de l'arabe dialectal, langue exclusivement parlée, dépourvue de tout prestige, non enseignée dans les écoles, a pu se généraliser sur le domaine extra-péninsulaire…"(2)

The instigation of their evolution, in fact, can be drawn to the Islamic conquests for conversion (during the 7th and 8th c.), when both the Arab armies and the converted indigenous were brought together due to mixed marital bonds. This event gave

rise to a spectrum of vernaculars. Hence, it was only for ease of reference that philologists divided the resulting speeches into two major geographical sectors: an oriental and an occidental (or maghribi)(3) area to which MTG pertains.

Among the pioneering works that dealt with the description of an Arabic spoken variety, is that of François de Dombay’s "Grammatica linguae-arabicae".

An article in which he accounts for Tanger’s dialect. Since then, and especially from 1850 onwards, extensive attempts were conducted in this linguistic avenue that summoned the contribution of many distinguished dialoctologists such as G. S. Colin, W. Marçais, Ph. Marçais, J. Cantineau, D. Cohen, A. Dhina... - to name but a few.

As far as one knows, relatively little has been written on MTG, particularly if one compares the brief instances advanced in its issue with those of other central Algerian towns (Algiers, Oran, Constantine and some Saharian towns). In this respect, Ph. Marçais (1941) writes: "La seule vue un peu générale qu’on est tenté de prendre des formes variées que revêt l’ arabe parlé en Algérie se présente comme un triptyque reposant sur un socle : chaque volet recouvre le territoire d’un département administrative, l’Oranie, l’Algérois, le Constantinois ; et le socle, se sont les territoires du Sud"(4).

This division of the Algerian dialects into three mainstream departments - which was also agreed upon by Cantineau (1938, 1939, 1940, 1941)(5) - does not count MTG under its headings. A fact that enticed us to embark on a lengthening of what had been previously reported about this vernacular.

To start with, the town's coastal position had the role of facilitating regional contacts - through commercial transactions - and dialect contact by the same token. Besides, an introductory survey of the historical incursions experienced by the town, as well as its key geographical setting, allowed us to make a direct link between the linguistic heterogeneity of MTG and the contribution of these factors to it.

Mostaganem witnessed the presence of Spain (16th c), Turkey (18th c), and France (19th c) on its land. These Indo-European countries left their prints in the citizens daily conversations and some linguistic interferences still partake their lexical repertoire. These interferences are manifested through some of the sound drifts and lexical borrowings illustrated below:

(likul)	from French	"l'école"	"school"
(ravaj)	from French	"réveil"	"alarm-clock"
(baxnuq)	from Turkish		"cloth"
(Tobsi)	from Turkish		"plate"
(Rokna)	from Spanish	"rincón"	"corner"
(kola)	from Spanish	"cola"	"queue"

Emphasis:

In this section one shall not proceed to a critical analysis of what is still treated as an unsolved and controversial issue in Arabic Linguistics. Rather, one shall mention some earlier approaches that dealt with "emphasis" in Arabic(6). Thereafter, to select from them what could be considered as "true emphatics" from series of realizations in MTG. Note that for typing conveniences, emphatic consonants will be mentioned in capital letters. "Emphasis" is far from being a recent field of

inquiry. Its presence may be witnessed in nearly every descriptive approach to the dialects of Arabic[6]. However, one should be limited here to one feature of its four other areas of research[(7)]. Namely, as a consonantal phenomenon.

An extended reading in the literature will perhaps disclose the first institutionary work of the present distinction between "emphatic" vs. "non-emphatic" consonants. In his "Kitab" - written around 750 A. D - Sibawayhi accounts for the entire phonetic repertoire of Arabic. He identifies, on the one hand, the muTbaqa (which are the emphatics) as being the dAd, the sAd, the TA and the Za'; that is S, D, T, Dh respectively.

On the other hand, he sees the munfatiha as all the consonants exclusive to these. This is merely because their tongue's position differs radically from that of the previously mentioned ones. The muTbaqa altogether with q, x, g form the musta'liyya. That is, "Consonants which have a raising (of the tongue) toward the upper palate"[(8)].

In the time when Ph. Marçais (1948) brought his contribution to the investigations done on the Arabic of the Maghreb, a new feature of "emphatic" specification was advanced. Pharyngealization became a reference as to the way those thick sounds are produced. Thus, and by pointing out to the narrowing of the pharyngeal cavity on account of the lowering of the dorsum of the tongue and the retraction of its root, Ph. Marçais stood against Sibawayhi and other traditional grammarians previous assumptions.

A great number of structuralists during the decade between 1950 and 1960 geared all their efforts to model this binary opposition of "emphatic / non- emphatic" consonants of

Arabic on the grounds of distinctive features. This was probably done in an attempt to restructure the asymmetry of a broken system, in order to create - as many phonologists strived to do - a harmonic balance between the allocated segments in phoneme repertoires.

Among those "emphasis-hunters", R. Jackobson (1957) stands as the holder of a new analogy between the classical concepts of "tafxim" and "tarqiq" with those of "flat" and "plain" accordingly.

Unlike De Sacy (1810), for instance, who considered in his selection the voiced S, D, T, Dh, q with their corresponding voiceless s, t, d, z, k, Jakobson came with a more extensive list including the four dentals S, D, T, the velars q, x, y and 9 which he called pharyngealized laryngeals. Then, the less distributed B, M, N.

Such are few attempts that cannot cover the substantial works and explored avenues done on this unsettled issue. Thereby, it may be appropriate at this stage to leave the theoretical aspect and embark on a more practical procedure to discriminate between what can be considered as "surface-emphatics" and what one regards as true "thick timbers" in MTG.

A consideration of the following perfective and singular forms together with their imperfective and plural transformations will help in making this distinction.

Set: 1	**Perfective**	**Imperfective**	
tarf:	"a slice"	mtarraf:	"sliced"
metra:	"a metre"	emetar:	"he measures"
9ad:	"he bit"	e9ad:	"he bites"

byud:	"he hated"	jabyud:	"he hates"
saab:	"he found"	eseb:	"he finds"
sna9:	"he fabricated"	masnuu9:	"fabricated"
	Singular	**Plural**	
taabla:	"a table"	twaabal:	"tables"
gat:	"a cat"	gtuuta:	"cats"
mesmaar:	"a screw"	msamiir:	"screws"
rgas:	"he danced"	ragsu:	"they danced"
Set: 2	**Perfective**	**Imperfective**	
wallah:	"and God"	billaah:	"by God"
kbaar:	"grown up"	jakbar:	"he grows up"
baarak:	"he congratulated"	mabruuk:	"congratulations"
	Singular	**Plural**	
naar:	"fire"	niiraan:	"fires"
faar:	"mouse"	fiiraan:	"mice"
maajda:	"coffee-table"	mwaajad:	"coffee-tables"

Following Farouk. A. N. Bouhadiba's Thesis (1988)[9], the coronals T, S, D do preserve their full quality of emphatics irrespective to the morphophonemic contexts in which they occur. The liquids l, r, by contrast, are realized solely as such in specific environments. This is basically due to some phonological derivations which, as soon as they are applied, alter their emphatic status and reveal their plain realizations at surface levels. The labials "b", m and the dental "n" are too victims of this loss of the + prosodeme feature.

The "true-emphatics" that one recognizes for MTG are, thereupon, the S, T, D. While the other exercised consonants, and on account of their instability, exclude themselves from this phonological consideration. Hence, becoming unqualified

for the thick brand.

The Phoneme Inventory of MTG:

The phoneme inventory of language is a set of bundles of feature specifications. For many linguists, Trubetzkoy (1939)[(10)] among others, the included phonemes are defined in terms of oppositions. They are contrastive units that contribute to the semantic load of words. This is what happens when one contrasts the phonemes "k" and "g" in words like came and game.

Charles Hockett's (1942) specification speaks rather of a "class of phones determined by six criteria"[(11)]. Among them, stands the feature of pattern congruity which one would like to dwell on a bit due to its inexistence in the Algerian phonological system. If one compares it to the English arrays of sounds, for instance, one shall see that the aspect of contrast is quite obvious in it.

As an illustration, look at these fricative pairs f, v, o, s, z, CH, DJ; stops p, b, t, d, k, g; affricates tCH, dDJ; liquids l, r; glides w, j; and the glottal segments 9, h. There appears to be an equilibrium which is somehow missing in MTG' s phoneme inventory if one factors out the number of holes which can be detected at first sight. Furthermore, a considerable number of consonants stand by themselves functioning as independent phonemes. Namely, the unpaired labials "m" and "w"; the dental "n"; the velar "q"; and the glottal "h".

Those individual segments form indeed an uneven consonantal distribution in the pattern. To draw a parallel between the Arabic and the English phoneme inventories will be to note, also, that while the former has only two oral

consonants b, f, the latter has four. These are, the voiceless and voiced stops p, b, and the voiceless and voiced fricatives f, v, respectively. Consequently, it is worth pointing out that the phoneme "b" - even if it exists in Arabic - proves different from that of English, since that of Arabic does not have the phoneme "p" to contrast with. The same thing can be applied to "f" and "v". Subsequently, MTG's phoneme inventory overlaps the aggregate of twenty seven phonemes - as a close list - open to free variation.

In one of Gleason's (1955) phoneme definitions, he draws attention to the fact that phonemes should not only be "phonetically similar" but that they should also: "show certain characteristic patterns of distribution in the language or dialect under consideration"[(12)].

This precision, in fact, will gear us to account for the palato-affricates tCH, dDJ present in our phoneme inventory, despite the lack of the fortis affricate tCH in MTG.

A pair of qualitatively mixed phonemes such as a fricative with an affricate (CH, dDJ) or vice versa (tCH, DJ) will be oddly perceived by any phonologist. Martinet (1936)[(13)] - who appeals for the notion of pattern congruity - points out to the fact that the tCH sound should be analyzed exactly with its corresponding voiced dDJ in a way that allows them to be balanced in their binary opposition.

This is a necessary phonological criterion to take into account despite having divergent contrasts. For, on distributional grounds, it is rather the realizations CH, dDJ that we obtained from our informants. Therefore, it is more conventional to state that the phoneme tCH rewrites CH and

tCH, while, the fortis fricative CH is highly opted for than the fortis affricate tCH. Additionally, while the phoneme dDJ encompasses DJ and dDJ as its allophones, the former is mainly adopted by Mostaganem speakers who hardly or occasionally use the variant DJ.

From the previous discussion, one can draw the following illustrative table that covers the totality of MTG's phonemes.

Syllable Structure:

If one wants to understand what may operate in MTG at a phonotactic level, the least one needs is a unit on the basis of which accounts will be rendered. In this respect, the syllable stands as the most appropriate linguistic ground on which phonemes' distribution can be handled and explained. Furthermore, inferences can be logically drawn about their whole organization around the nucleus.

Below is an exhaustive list of various types of syllables shapes (canons) attributed to the dialect under study.

Syllable Structure	**Examples**	**Gloss**
1- cv	fi	"in"
2- ccv	sma	"sky"
3- cccv	stha	"he got ashamed"
4- cvc	hak	"here you are"
5- cvcc	hall	"he opened"
6- cvccc	ma sabtch	"I did not find"
7- ccvc	9raf	"he knew"
8- ccvcc	sbaqt	"I overtook"
9- ccvccc	ma rbahtch	"I did not win"
10- cccvc	nsbagh	"it was dyed"
11- cccvcc	nsra9t	"I was hit"

12- cccvccc ma nghbantch "I was not troubled"
13- ccccvccc ma nddjrahtch "I was not injured"

One can note that MTG hardly allows for a VC build-up. This is exceptionally found in some interjections. However, and as advocated by A. Martinet (1965), interjections are ousted from any phonological consideration. What he calls double articulation is but a reference to the impossibility of such monemes as uf? huff! or aj? aw! to be segmented into phonemes irrespective of language’s duality.

The CV structure is, too, distributionally limited if one considers the main stream occurrence of the voiced palato-affricate dDJ as opposed to the system of ORSA (here, Oran Spoken Arabic), for instance, which espouses the CV model.

As an example, consider MTG’s verb dDJa "he came", and his equivalent ORSA DJa. Moreover, MTG replicates this last structure on account of its meager manifestation.

What one should set out, also, is that neither of the foregoing sequential consonant/vowel classifications allow for a vocalic repeated occurrence. Besides, this aspect is hinted at by Ph. Marçais (1952) in his study of an eastern Algerian dialect (Djidjelli) in particular, and of other Algerian dialects of Arabic as well stating that: "les syllabes y apparaissent le plus souvent réduits à leur plus simple expression : ils ne conservent que la charpente consonantique et un nombre restreint de voyelles, le strict minimum qu’exige l’articulation aisé et la spécification morphologique"(14).

In other words, they are taken as having a sequential constraint on the phonological plane. And even though monosyllabic and disyllabic words are the frequently

distinguished types, MTG’s words may start with a minimum of one syllable - as reported above - then stretch to a maximum of seven syllables.

To bring evidence to this statement, instances containing from three syllables-word to seven-syllables-word are put forward.

eg:

ta - kul - ha: "you eat it / she eats it"

9a - wan - na – ha: "we helped her"

ma - t9a - wad - dal - humch: "she will not repeat for them"

ma - wad - dar - na - ha - lakch: "we did not lose it"

ma - 9al - lam - na - hum - l - humch: "we did not teach these to them".

It follows from the previous thirteen syllabic patterns that the canonical shape attested to the system of MTG is $C^{3}1$ $VC^{3}0$.

Finally, one should say that the present work is but a first tentative launched by us in the dialectological arena. One admits that the results of this undertaking - though limited in scope and confined to one area - constitute a very promising asset for further research.

Notes:

1 - Regardless to its adjacent suburbs.

2 - G.- S. Colin : L’Arabe vulgaire à l’Ecole Nationale des Langues Orientales Vivantes, (1948), p. 97.

3 - Stretching from Morocco to Western Libya and neighboring African countries to the immediate South, as opposed to Eastern (or oriental) Arabic sometimes referred to as Mesopotamian Arabic. See M.C. Bateson: Arabic Language Handbook, Washington, Center for Applied Linguistics (1967).

4 - J. Cantineau : Les parlers arabes du département d’Alger, in Actes du 3e Congrès de la Fédération des sociétés savantes (Constantine), Alger (1938), pp. 703 - 711. Les parlers arabes du département de Constantine, in Actes du 4e Congrès (Rabat), Alger (1939), T. II, pp. 849 - 854. Les parlers arabes du département d’Oran, in Revue africaine, (1940), pp. 220 - 231. Les parlers arabes des territoires du Sud, in Revue africaine, (1941), pp. 71 - 77.

5 - S. de Sacy, (1810) is among the first scholars to use this word.

6 - The exceptions being Maltese and some dialects of North Afghanistan and Central Asia. Cf. J. Aquilina: The Structure of Maltese, Malta (1959), p. 30.

7 - Other areas of research include emphasis as a segmental characteristic of some vowels and consonants; as a feature of supra-segmental analysis; and as an aesthetic phenomenon. Cf. A. Khalafallah: A Descriptive Grammar of Saidi Egyptian Colloquial Arabic, (1969), pp. 27 - 31.

8 - Sibawayh: II, p. 285.

9 - F. A. Bouhadiba: Aspects of Algerian Arabic Verb, Phonology And Morphology, University of Reading, Ph. D. thesis, (1988), pp. 55 - 56.

10 - N. S. Trubetzkoy: Grundzüge der Phonology TCLP 7. Eng. Version, trans. C. Baltaxe (1969), Principles of Phonology, Berkely. Univ. of California, Press (1939), p. 36.

11 - The other features are those of similarity, non-intersection, contrastive and complementary distribution, completeness, and economy. Ch. Hockett: System of Descriptive Phonology, (1942), p. 100.

12 - H. A. Gleason: An Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics. New York, Holt, Rinechart and Winston (1955), p. 261.

13 - A. Martinet : Neutralisation et archiphonème. TCLP (1939), p. 73.

14 - Ph. Marçais : Etude d’un parler arabe du nord Constantinois (Djidjelli), (1952), p. 42.